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**SKILL DEVELOPMENT LEAVE:
STAGES TO UNIVERSAL ACCESS**

Alan M. Thomas

**Skill
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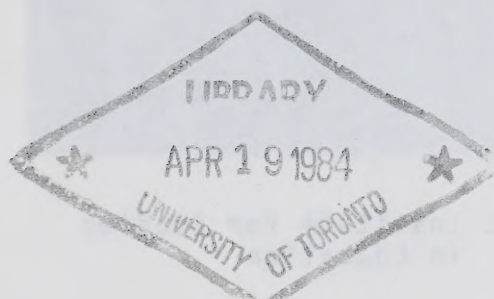
**SKILL DEVELOPMENT LEAVE:
STAGES TO UNIVERSAL ACCESS**

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Ontario Institute for Studies
in Education

March 31, 1983

This is one in a series of background papers prepared for the Task Force on Skill Development Leave. The opinions expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Task Force or the Department of Employment and Immigration.




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Introduction

In May of 1978 the Minister of Labour for Canada appointed a Commission of Inquiry on Educational Leave and Productivity. In the course of its preliminary discussions, the Commission identified five "major questions."

1. Should opportunities for educational leave be expanded to enable working people to participate in vocational training, general social and civic education, union education?
2. To whom, and for how long, should such leave be available?
3. Should individuals granted educational leave be entitled to financial support, and if so, how should necessary funds be generated?
4. Should working Canadians have a legal right to take educational leave?
5. What costs, benefits and problems might be expected to result from an expansion of opportunities for educational leave? (Adams, Draper & Ducharme, 1979, pp. 8-9)

After some public consultations with a variety of public and private bodies of which "the predominant view . . . was that education and training should be reasonably available to all Canadians" (Adams et al., 1979, p. 9), the Commission concluded that "our report would have to answer additional questions not explicit in our mandate" (Adams et al., 1979, p. 17). These questions were:

1. Do working people in Canada have serious educational and training needs, and if so, is educational leave the appropriate vehicle for addressing those needs?
2. Might educational leave be utilized more effectively than is now the case?

3. Are steps other than an educational leave initiative called for?
4. Would the benefits to be derived from expanding the educational opportunities of working people justify the requisite costs? (Adams et al., 1979, p. 17)

The additional questions are significant. First (no. 2), they reflect the Commission's discovery that leave, that is, absence from the workplace, with or without pay, and with no loss of status or benefits, already existed to a considerable degree in Canada. Second, in raising questions about specific educational deficiencies among working Canadians, the Commission identified the fact that leave for purposes of educational or skill development is no more than a means to solving those problems of deficiency, and it could be possible that there are other or additional means to be sought for that purpose. In this sense, then, they introduced the fundamental questions that so significant a step as introducing the right to leave must confront.

For example:

- Why is absence from the workplace necessary, and for what purpose or purposes?
- If the problems are of an educational or skill development nature, can they be met by improving the education of the young, and consequently do we need to bother with the present generation of adults?
- Who should decide not only the large policy questions with respect to the degree of access to leave available throughout the society, but who should decide with respect to individual utilization of leave?

Their answer to the first of their questions was blunt:

Opportunities for working people to acquire and update general vocational qualifications are far from adequate. There is a serious problem of adult illiteracy; and union

representatives are under-educated for their tasks and responsibilities. (Adams et al., 1979, p. 17)

Running through the entire Commission Report is the question of who benefits most from leave for developmental purposes, and who should benefit most? Since learning can only be accomplished by individuals, the issue must always be finally decided in those terms. The question is what ought to be the relationship between the individual who learns something he or she did not know, could not do, and the source of the financial support for that learning? What the Commission found was that in the absence of any legislated rights to leave, such as those existing in France, Belgium and Sweden, leave in Canada was granted overwhelmingly at the pleasure of the employer, and was used for pursuing "vocational" goals, acceptable presumably to both employee and employer but largely initiated and determined by the employer. In public service organizations of various kinds, the Commission found that "vocational" was susceptible to some breadth of interpretation. For example,

During 1977/78, 39 employees of the federal Department of the Solicitor-General (Canadian Correctional Services Division) were on extended leave at over 20 universities taking courses in such subjects, as nursing, administration, architecture, criminology, financial management, psychology, recreology, and sociology. Seventeen were enrolled in undergraduate programs, 13 in certificate or diploma programs, five were working towards a master's degree and one towards a doctorate. (Adams et al., 1979, p. 18)

In these cases, the report continued,

Employees may be granted educational leave with full pay, continuation of benefits, payment of tuition, books, and travel, continuation of seniority and a guarantee of the same or a similar job on return if the relevant official (e.g., a deputy minister) often with the concurrence of the Public Service Commission, decides that (a) the training coincides with an essential operational need of the department, (b) the employee is capable of successfully completing the course, and (c) the training is consistent with the career development of the employee. (Adams et al.,

1979, p. 184)

The latter examples would appear to be very nearly archtypical examples of skill development leave, involving a broad interpretation of the word "skill" and the maximum flexibility in providing for individual objectives. Nevertheless, they exist at the pleasure of the employer.

The only substantial exception to this circumstance identified by the Commission were a limited number of collective agreements, negotiated primarily by the United Auto Workers, whereby union members were entitled to leave and costs for the purpose of taking part in educational programs provided by the union. In addition were the traditional rights to "sabbatical leave" enjoyed by university professors, though it was acknowledged that in recent years there had been increasing amounts of "direction" of such leaves on the part of Boards of Governors of universities.

What is of the greatest significance in the revelations regarding the existing use of skill development leave is that it is the employers who have acknowledged the need for the absence from the workplace by their employees for purposes that may be employer determined, but which can only be met by individuals agreeing to transform themselves through learning. While the exact mixture of time, meaning "duration," and space, meaning "the distance from the workplace" or "the type of location chosen to support the learning," remains a matter of debate and extensive experimentation, the need for intervention into the daily rhythms of the workplace itself has been accepted by many employers.

In the analysis of the specific study undertaken by the Commission, the following general patterns emerged. The vast bulk of leave was employer generated and designed, with some growth in leave for officers of labour organizations arising from collective agreements or federal assistance or both; leaves were relatively short, with longer ones being utilized by senior personnel, and more frequently in the public service.

There were no significant sex differences in the availability of leave. If anything women appear to be favoured. They make up about 33% of the labour force of all responding establishments but 38% of the leave-takers for which data on sex [are] available. (Adams et al., 1979, p. 181)

Availability of leave was concentrated among large employers, though such agencies as the Petroleum Industry Training Service of Alberta and the Trust Companies Institute of Canada were examples of employer groups making it possible for large and small employers and employees to benefit.

The Commission concluded its study, saying:

The existing problems cannot be overcome entirely by the greater availability of time off from work. Educational leave could, however be used more effectively than is now the case. For some working Canadians to have reasonable access to educational programs the availability of educational leave is essential. (Adams et al., 1979, p. 220)

The Commission also concluded that one type of leave will not be sufficient, and that even where leave is available it is utilized more by those already possessing educational achievement, than by those who do not, but who need such opportunities as much if not more than others. While the Commission did not recommend the development of a new "labour standard" or legislating educational leave, it did recommend that the federal government ratify the International Labour

Organization's Convention No. 140 in support of educational leave. It also went on to recommend a number of administrative and financial measures which will be taken up in the body of the paper.

The essence of the Commission's recommendations were:

- An educational system confined entirely to the young was no longer sufficient for Canada's needs. Evidence from other countries and from Canada itself supported that view.
- The educational task involved could not be accomplished without some intervention in the normal or conventional working patterns of adults, namely, absence from the workplace without financial or personal cost. Employers had already acknowledged this necessity.
- The educational system had to become much more flexible in terms of admissions, programs, and the availability of certification if these problems were to be met.
- A variety of mechanisms needed to be introduced to suit the variety of needs and demands, individual and collective
- Greater attention must be given to individual choice.

The Intervening Years

Since the publication of the Report of the Commission in 1979, we can only surmise what has happened. The lack of accurate information about leave and its utilization, as about adult participation in education in general, a lack identified by the Commission, continues in Canada. Companion studies for this Task Force may remedy the situation temporarily, but it is to be hoped that the Task Force will address the matter of the need for accurate information regularly available. All evidence indicates that without it, any implementation

of skill development leave, on any scale, must fail.

Nevertheless, a recent survey commissioned by the Canadian Association for Adult Education and the Institute Canadienne d'Education des Adultes (CAAE, 1982) indicates that despite the present availability of skill development leave, and the apparent availability of publicly provided part-time programs of adult education and training, 62% of the population reported that they had "finished my schooling and have not taken any additional course of any description" (CAAE, 1982, p. 5). While the confining of the term "learner" only to those who take courses in the study is unfortunate and misleading, nevertheless the Report confirms evidence provided by other similar investigations in Canada, the United States, and nearly every other industrial society in the world (see Johnstone & Riviera, 1965; Waniewicz, 1976). The majority of adults participating in education, private and public, are drawn from among those who occupy the upper half of the education-income group of the population. They are those who have already benefitted most from the formal youth-centred system, those who occupy the better jobs and earn the larger incomes, though they are not those who pay all or even the majority of taxes for the support of the public systems. It would be foolish to deny that these individuals, who occupy the positions in the society upon which the greatest demands for learning are made, do not need access to the education they utilize and enjoy. However, we must be concerned about the other half of the society, which enjoys none of the access, but which still must live in a rapidly changing society of altered patterns of employment, emerging skills, and new challenges of citizenship. It would appear that over the past decade

or more, even with the emergence of skill development leave, or perhaps because of the way it has emerged, the gap between the participants in education, and the non-participants, especially as adults, has been growing. It is a gap that no democratic society can afford.

Other Countries

Examination of information from Europe, namely from ten countries (see Thomas, 1983) (the ten countries are Australia, Belgium, France, West Germany, Italy, Japan, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom) is revealing in this respect. In the ten countries examined, there are a variety of patterns. Sweden, Belgium, France and four states of West Germany have legislated the right to skill development leave. Other countries have developed schemes of leave based on collective bargaining, for example Italy and the United Kingdom. Italy and Belgium are particularly concerned with access to formal educational upgrading, France, the United Kingdom, and West Germany with vocational education, though all support some forms of leave for general educational purposes. In particular, Sweden has combined the objectives of growth (efficiency) with the objectives of equity (redistribution of wealth) by creating a mixture of legislated rights for all, differential financing, maximum use of loans and grants, and a careful and widespread attention to the dissemination of information about leave, and the provision of counselling and guidance facilities.

In general, in the past decade in most industrial countries, the following characteristics have emerged:

1. No single pattern prevails either in one country, or between two countries. All use different combinations of relatively similar mechanisms.
2. No single goal is shared by more than one country or prevails in one country.
3. In every country the right to leave, legislated or not, is generally separated from the right to maintenance payments and/or tuition fees, if any.
4. Every country has made some provision for entitlement to leave for officials of labour organizations.
5. At no time since the inception of available leave, in any country, have the ceilings been reached, that is, at no time have all those eligible for leave claimed it.
6. The most frequently utilized leave is for employer sponsored skill development programs.
7. The most frequently pursued objectives of leave in all countries are of a vocational nature.
8. The average leave-taker is under 40, above the level of blue-collar worker, and male.

Overall, for our purposes, the most interesting example is Sweden. In that country, the legislated right to leave for all provides a floor upon which a great variety of programs and financial provisions are constructed. There would appear to be the maximum mingling of individual and collective goals for learning.

Developments in Europe suggest many similarities with Canada in terms of the types of individuals who make the most frequent and

systematic use of available skill development leave. However, there is evidence of a small but growing number of individuals who are making use of their rights to skill development leave for their own general development, as well as for the benefit of an employer or some other collective entity, such as a trade union.

Paid educational leave remains a marginal institution in the vast field of adult education. Compared with the numbers of workers trained by and in the undertakings; of job seekers attending retraining courses; and of workers enrolled in evening classes, the annual number of workers taking paid educational leave is small: 30,000 in Italy, 20,000 in Belgium and 21,000 in France. In Sweden paid educational leave corresponded to 12,800 trainee years in 1978-79; in Belgium the special fund is even left with a surplus. (Luttringer & Pasquier, 1980, p. 422)

Using the most narrow definition of skill development leave possible, as the quotation implies, these authors were still able to detect those numbers of individuals availing themselves of its benefits. The importance of these numbers is that they are made up to a great extent by individuals from groups in those societies who have not in the past taken part in adult education. It seems reasonable to conclude that it is the legislated individual right to leave, plus other more familiar incentives, many of which are to be found in Canada, that bring this participation about.

There is little evidence of participation by such individuals from such groups in Canada, and it is likely there will not be unless some radical intervention is undertaken. To merely encourage, or maximize, the present dynamics that underly the relationships between employment and education will be to confound existing problems rather than to correct them.

Two aspects of the European experience need emphasizing. The first is that on no occasion have all those qualified for skill

development leave utilized the opportunity. There need be no reason for Canada to fear an enormous rush, in fact the percentages in most of the countries have been very small. Second, time is not enough. The simple availability of leave, at least within the various rules and restrictions applied by each of the countries, has not been sufficient to meet the educational/training objectives for the adult population that have been sought. Despite that fact, there can be no doubt of the importance of time as a principal ingredient in meeting those objectives. The situation seems similar to that provided by the purveyors of lottery tickets: "a purchase won't guarantee that you win, but not to purchase is to guarantee that you won't."

Leave and Learning

Successful systems of skill development leave involve three major factors: a variety of mechanisms for the obtaining/granting of leave and the provision of maintenance and tuition costs; flexible learning/educational systems responsive to the needs of adult learners; and finally, individual learners who are able and willing to bring the time and energy necessary for learning.

In the past 50 years, a great deal has been learned about "learning" separated from that characteristic of children and schools. Perhaps the overriding development has been the current acceptance of the fact that adults, as adults, learn, that learning is a natural characteristic of adult life, and that what is learned as an adult can be as important as what is learned as a child. A further set of facts of importance to us are:

- Adults learn about what makes sense to them, and their investment of energy is directly related to the degree of

freedom of choice of what is to be learned.

- Adults may take longer than the young to learn some things, particularly mechanical skills, but they can and do learn them.
- All of adults' past experience is involved in attempts to learn new things, particularly previous experience with learning itself and with school as the initial associate of learning.
- Learning by adults both demands and releases energy.
- Most adults prefer jobs where there is a chance to learn.

Any system or sub-system of skill development leave must take account of the fundamental need to motivate the learner. It is a means of making some learning objectives more accessible, and therefore more attractive, but those objectives, and the means of reaching them, must be consonant with the rest of the adult learner's experience, or the mechanism will be of no avail. Therefore, we must consider that an important aspect of universality will be its relationship to individual capacity. Universality, in the form of a mechanical equality of access to skill development leave, is not likely to produce the results needed in this society. In many respects, such a state of affairs most closely resembles what presently exists. Educational or skill development opportunities are widely spread in Canada, at least in terms of surface availability. However, all the evidence of actual use of these resources, including available leave, is that they appear to be recognized as resources by only part of the society. In fact, it is likely that they are only resources for that part of the society, since the remainder has little confidence in their relevance, in the outcomes of utilization, or in their individual ability to benefit from them. Therefore, the present

circumstances, or a mechanical extension of accessibility of leave, will contribute only to growth, and to limited growth at that, and nothing to economic equity, either in terms of income or in terms of the opportunity to develop skills at a later stage than adolescence.

Therefore, while the basic individual right to choose must be maintained by a legislated right to leave, further intervention, perhaps in terms of real affirmative action programs, will be necessary. The Swedish example of providing very short leaves, of two or three days, for individuals with little education so that they may experience the benefit is one such intervention. Providing larger subsidies for members of such groups in Swedish society is an example of another.

Steps to Universality

Legislation - The First Stage

The first stage to universality, therefore, must be the introduction by the federal government of some form of skill development leave as a labour standard. The regulation should include two weeks' leave per year for all employees within federal jurisdiction, with the right to accumulate such leave, in cooperation with the employer over a seven-year period. The right to leave, without loss of position, seniority or benefits, would not include a similar right to maintenance payments or tuition fees which would have to be negotiated separately. In addition, there would need to be some limit on the number of employees of any one organization who can be on leave at the same time. The most common European figure is 2% of the total workforce in any company. In this way a basic individual right to some self-determination in pursuing learning objectives will be assured. In this instance, the federal government is to be seen as

legislator as distinct from employer. The latter matter will be dealt with in common with all employers.

While the numbers affected may be a small proportion of the total workforce, the example should have a profound influence on other jurisdictions. Clearly, cooperation with the provinces and other parties must be involved. Experience in Europe makes it clear that in most of the countries where the legislated right exists, France and Belgium for example, a high level of agreement had been reached between employers and trade unions before such legislation was introduced. In Sweden, a failure to reach a negotiated agreement stimulated the recourse to legislative action, which is now generally accepted. In Canada, two provinces, New Brunswick and Quebec, have indicated interest in introducing their own legislation, and:

It seems . . . that more recently a consensus is developing placing the responsibility for industry and plant-specific shortages primarily with the employers and placing the responsibility for the overall educational setting (school-job transition, program linkage, etc.) and for general vocational training primarily with governments. Action on the basis of this partial consensus implies a high degree of cooperation of all parties involved if integrated policy solutions are to be achieved. In British Columbia this trend is emerging in the increasing interaction and cooperation of the employers' organizations and the unions with the provincial government Ministries of Education and Labour, and with training agencies in the Occupational Training Council and the Provincial Apprenticeship Board. (Schuyff, 1980, p. 26)

We have gone beyond the recommendation of the Adams' Commission in this case, because the educational needs seem greater than at the time of the Report, and because some of the socio-political changes recommended as conditions at that time, seem to have begun to take place.

Types of Leave--Duration and Financial Support

The precise form of leave embodied in the recommended labour standard, can serve most usefully as a legitimizing device for the principle of skill development leave, and for the essential individual rights associated with it. Even if all provinces were to introduce such "legislation" it would only extend to those employed in the conventional labour market. Universality implies much more than that.

All available evidence, including that furnished by the Report of the Adams' Commission, insists that no single type of leave will do, and this insistence extends both to the duration and the methods of finance. What is required is a mixed and unavoidably complicated system of allocating leave to individuals and of providing the finance. We are occasionally, in such matters bearing on the education of adults, limited in our imagination by the simplicity that has attended the organization and financing of the compulsory education of children. It is obvious that no such simplicity can attend the education of adults, and particularly so fundamental a matter as the provision of skill development leave.

The Adams' Report identifies three basic patterns of duration for skill development leave: the day-release; the block release, such as we are accustomed to associate with most conventional apprenticeship programs; and extended leave, such as that represented by the programs carried out by the Canadian Corrections System (Adams et al., 1979, p. 3). These are the basic patterns to be found everywhere in the world. However, the important point is not the mechanical application of such patterns, though that can be observed in some countries, but the utilization of the pattern most likely to meet the

needs of the learner and to best accomplish the education/training objective. The latter is, of course, the point of intervention. Sweden appears to manage this best of all the European countries, and it is by the manipulation of financial resources for varying purposes that the results are achieved.

In financing skill development leave, there are two principal costs: the provision of reasonable maintenance to the individual taking the leave, and the payment of tuition fees or other comparable costs. The best known example of Canada's provision of leave on a large scale is the program provided for returning veterans of the Second World War under the direction of the Department of Veterans' Affairs. Anyone growing up in that period, and particularly attending post-secondary education, will remember the omnipresence of the "DVA," and the events associated with the days upon which cost of living cheques arrived. In that case, individuals were provided with cost of living allowances, varying on the basis of marital circumstances, tuition fees, and the costs of books and other materials. In addition, the teaching bodies chosen by the individuals were provided with additional subsidy on the basis of how many DVA students they attracted. In essence, this was a brand of "earned" leave, by virtue of years of military service. However, so long as they passed their courses, individuals were financed to the full extent of the programs they pursued, even to the limit of their aspirations and abilities. There is no final assessment of the value of the DVA scheme to the country, but there can be no doubt of the importance of the trained and educated individuals that were provided to a growing economy, or of the contribution to the morale of the individuals included, and of

the country as a whole.

The financing of skill development leave, in a federal system, must be managed as much by fitting it into practices and mechanisms already in existence, as by the introduction of new ones. The degree to which we can make use of existing practices is probably the degree to which leave will be most rapidly extended in Canadian society. Both allocation of leave, and the provision of finance, should be undertaken at all three levels of government, in the sense of these governments acting as legislative and administrative bodies, and not only as employers, though in the light of the size of the public service in Canada, that role will be a significant one even by itself.

A presentation of various possible combinations of skill development leave will allow us to pursue the various possibilities of execution and finance. The Report of the Adams Commission, and all subsequent research in Canada and elsewhere, reveals how widely the term "skill development leave," or, as in most other countries, "paid educational leave" is applied. The concept contained in the International Labour Organization convention of 1974 in support of PEL, a convention that the government of Canada has yet to ratify, continues to serve as an ideal, but usage has outstripped its principal provisions. Therefore, what follows is a series of descriptions which move from the most essential ingredients of skill development leave, through various combinations, at least one of which is now in use in one country or another.

1. [Temporary] leave from the workplace without loss of position, status or benefits.

We have bracketed "temporary" since we wish to extend the

concept to providing for the unemployed, which means in our sense (see CERI, OECD, 1979; Emmerij, 1982) the "voluntary" use of leave for the purpose of changing employers rather than jobs. We also segregate this basic element, since it is likely that the developing patterns of employment in Canada will necessitate the extension of the labour standard to leave not necessarily associated with education or training. For example, Australia has legislated the access to relatively generous "long-service leave" which has not to date been basically associated with educational objectives, though it may have been used for that purpose, and may increase in that use.

2. For educational and/or training purposes.
3. Guaranteed by legislation.
4. To attend a program of the individual's choice financed entirely by the individual.
5. To attend a program of the individual's choice financed entirely by a public body.
6. To attend a program of the individual's choice financed by the employer and a public body.
7. To attend a program chosen by the employer, provided by the employer, and financed by the employer.
8. To attend a program negotiated with the employer, provided by another body, and financed by the employer, a public body, the individual, or some combination of all three.
9. To attend a program sponsored by a labour organization, provided by the labour organization, and financed by means of

collective bargaining, public funds or a combination of both.

10. For more than three days and less than a year.

11. For more than a year.

The vast bulk of leave available in Canada at present is available in the following patterns: 1-2, 7-10, and infrequently 11; 1-2, 8-10, and more frequently 11, since this pattern is to be found most often in the public service; 1-2-5, this pattern encompasses apprenticeship programs; and finally 1-2-9-10, and very infrequently 11. There are examples to be found of 1-2-4 and 1-2-5, since all formal agencies of education report an increase in enrollment by adults pursuing full-time studies. Nearly 20% of full-time university undergraduate students are over the age of 20, and predominantly in their forties.

It is clear that there is public and private finance available for skill development leave, though we have already indicated how unevenly it is distributed. We are leaving out the unemployed, despite the expenditures for manpower training, since they are not considered to be on voluntary leave, and all those adults not considered to be in the labour force, the bulk of whom are homemakers. To be universal in application, a system of skill development leave must include members of these groups.

Our first concern, after individual rights have been provided for by legislation, must be for the employed, partly because they are the easiest to reach, and partly because changing the meaning of employment through those now holding jobs is the easiest way to assist the unemployed. Canada has the largest labour force in its history,

and will have for more than 30 years as the top of the "baby boom" marches its way to retirement. It is this group upon whom will fall the largest demand for relearning skills and developing new attitudes and abilities. It is this group upon whom will fall the burden of the changing nature of work and employment.

Employer Training Funds—The Second Stage

The way to reach the employed is through the employers by ensuring adequate, systematic, accessible training programs. This principle has been accepted everywhere in Europe and Japan, so must it be in Canada. The large, high-technology employers have already accepted such responsibilities for many years. It is the medium-sized and smaller employers who fear the competitive disadvantage of training costs, despite evidence that their fears are not entirely justified (see Harvey, 1980, p. 59). The way to remedy this situation is by the imposition on all employers with more than 20 employees of the obligation to create a training fund, based on 1% of the net payroll per year. The funds could be disbursed by the employer, preferably in consultation with employees or their representatives in several ways.

If the labour standard is in force, the following combinations could be included: 1-2-3-4; 1-2-3-5; 1-2-3-6; 1-2-3-7; 1-2-3-8; and all combinations involving 10 or 11. If there is no such labour standard, the following combinations could apply: 1-2-4-7; 1-2-8; all combinations involving either 10 or 11. Funds unspent at the end of any one year would be paid to the federal government. Existing provisions for tax relief for training costs would be continued. Such training could include what some employers in Canada are already

doing: the training of employees who have become redundant for other jobs in the labour market.

The imposition of the Employers' Training Fund is the second major stage to universality. It locates training for job-specific skills, as well as for the more general development of employees where it can be most effectively planned and implemented, and where outcomes will have the most immediate and practical effect. It will also allow employers to plan their workforces more effectively than has been possible, and it will contribute substantially to the reduction of friction between employers and the educational system. While employers may continue or expand their use of external educational resources, they will have more control over the practical aspects of job-specific training.

What is often overlooked in these circumstances, a factor that Japanese experience seems to make clear, is that individuals develop loyalty towards the source of support for their learning, and are often willing to forego other immediate benefits in the maintenance of that loyalty. How else would school and university alumnae exist and perform their expected tasks?

Smaller employers will be able to enter into agreements to share training costs, as have the trust companies of Canada and the petroleum industry.

Over the next three decades, the age group most immediately affected by this measure will be a very large one, and therefore politically influential. It is apt to support such measures as are clearly directed to helping maintain individual employment as well as contributing what opportunities to learn always contribute to the

lives of individuals.

Public Funding

While access to the employed through the employer is a critical step toward universality, provision for the unemployed, the not-yet employed, and individuals moving in and out of the conventional workforce is more difficult and complex. The application of the Employers' Training Fund will contribute something to a reduction of unemployment. While Adams et al. report only limited attempts at replacement among those employers with employees on leave, we suspect that as the practice becomes more widespread, and more medium-sized employers without easily transferable staff are involved, replacement will become more common. A market of individuals that has become used to leave, and to the greater flexibility it introduces, will be able to supply such replacements.

However, we can have no idea of how great that demand may become, and in addition can only expect that it will come slowly. Therefore, while the use of the term "leave" with respect to the various groups of unemployed may seem to stretch the concept a good deal, it is the essential flexibility and the developmental aspects associated with the more conventional usage that we are anxious to extend to the entire population.

We must therefore turn to public funding. There are two sources of funds for skill development now available to Canadians on a substantial scale. One source is those funds provided for the training of the unemployed, mostly by the federal government, though there is some provincial provision as well; the other is the grants and loans, and sometimes bursaries, available to those conventionally

considered to be students. Funds for apprentices fall somewhere between the two.

What we propose is to decrease the present distinction between these two sources, since the individuals involved are all students. The result would be to enlarge the inclusiveness of the grant and loan system, as Sweden has done, until it becomes the dominant method of dealing with the necessary learning of everyone in the society. Grants and loans, then, would be available at all three levels of government, as would be mechanisms for applying for and granting skill development leave.

While the involuntary unemployed might not be in a visibly different situation, that is, he or she, depending upon individual circumstances, would be entitled to all grant and no loan for maintenance and tuition, other individuals and groups of individuals would, by means of their right to leave, and their ability to negotiate some balance of grant and loan, be able to alter their circumstances. For example:

The voluntary unemployed: in this case, an individual takes leave of his or her present employer because there is no foreseeable future for him or her. S/he applies for leave, and for financial assistance to pursue a program of education or training. The departure leaves at least a temporary opening for another worker, and the leave is not accompanied by the usual psychological destructiveness of enforced unemployment. Emmerij (1982) argues that such a mechanism can be used to persuade workers with a very low level of education into effective upgrading programs, making room for others, with less cost to the welfare and health resources of the

society.

The pre-employed: since formal education took over responsibilities for the vocational training of the young, the "transition from school to work" has been an endemic problem. Recently, as various forms of recurrent education have been engaged in by increasing numbers of our population, the problem has taken on a different character, involving all ages and an increase in the number of times the transition must be made. Nevertheless, the initial entry into the workforce remains a problem, and has been exacerbated in recent years by huge numbers of entrants, declining economies, and the need for enhanced skills and experience. The unemployment rate of the age group between 18 and 25 years is little short of scandalous. The solution of lengthening the preparatory period by more years in full-time school does not seem consonant with the realities of late-adolescent psychology, or with the demands that the society makes on them to be responsible, to find a mate, and to mature. Certainly that solution does not seem to be able to provide for the energy, capacity for intense commitment, and application that the young display. There is a limit to preparation. In a sense, we are arguing here for a pre-employment leave, that would include a learning environment, growth potential, and tasks to be performed of value both to the society and the individual. It would also provide for "experience" that more and more employers seem willing to value. In these cases, individuals would apply for financial assistance, made up of some combination of grant and loan, as do conventional students, and would apply that money to employment with some voluntary organization or other quasi-public body with community goals. These

arrangements could be made at the municipal level, perhaps most effectively of all, though they would not necessarily be confined there. In municipalities, funds for the grants and loans could come from reduced costs of welfare, and perhaps from a portion of the funds already granted to such organizations. At the same time, we would support the recommendations of the Adams' report with respect to the continuation of apprenticeship programs. For the trades they serve, they seem a reasonable means of entry, though they are in need of expansion, and of improvements in supervisory practices. What is perhaps the most important thing about them is that they introduce the young to a mixture of work and leave for learning that will characterize the rest of their lives.

Married women: the most flexibility with respect to participation in the workforce is provided by married women. The principal problem to be solved is to find the same flexibility in education/training systems to which they must have access. The movement in and out of the workforce is occasioned by the need for maternity leave, the need for two family incomes, and the fact that no society can afford to exclude as much intelligence and ability from the workforce as is represented by women. They hold up half the sky, and think at least half the thoughts. It is here that the employment system and the educational/training system must truly be joined. In this case, we are perhaps arguing less for formal "leave" which, in the case of women who are not employees and are not included in the other categories, must be a matter of domestic arrangement. However, we must argue for the same financial support that is usually associated with forms of leave such as child care costs, tuition fees,

books, travel, etc., and for access to educational and training programs. To a large degree it is a matter of the flexibility of the educational system. The argument is usually advanced as a matter of more financial support, that is, more access to grants and loans for part-time students. There have been recently some signs of progress in this area. However, what would be more sensible would be to abolish the distinction between the two categories of part- and full-time, as Finland has done, and simply assess students according to a formula based on the amount of time their particular programs involve. This step would not only help women, but all students who are or who must pursue their studies in unconventional ways. It would also encourage providing agencies to innovate with respect to programs of study. There is a much greater likelihood of such flexibility and innovation if the individual woman student has some economic independence.

The retired: this is a group that is increasing in numbers relatively slowly, but will increase very rapidly in the early part of the next century. It is also a group in which previous educational experience is growing, enlarging the number of healthy, vigorous individuals with a much greater interest in learning and in acting with respect to social and community concerns. While "leave" may seem superfluous with respect to retired people, access to educational resources, and the chance to learn is not. Educational agencies in Canada have made themselves and their programs accessible to older Canadians rather more than is generally understood. There will be growing pressure on them to become even more accessible, and it will be necessary for these provisions to be regarded as more than marginal both to the agencies and to the society as a whole. The federal

government in particular, with one singular exception, has been generally uninterested in the learning needs and capacities of older Canadians. The major exception is the New Horizons program, in which older Canadians are encouraged to formulate programs of action, which are then financed exclusive of income for the originators. A "relic" of the heady days of Opportunities for Youth (OFY) and Local Improvement Program (LIP), New Horizons has been retained in its quiet, low-profile existence. We believe that this program should be continued and strengthened, since it embodies all of the individual freedom, and the learning opportunities associated with skill development leave. To write off the older Canadian on the basis of no economic return on the investment, would be short-sighted in the extreme. They represent a novel and rapidly growing resource for Canadian society.

The similarities in the recommendations for the young and the old should be noted.

Trade unions: all European countries make some provision for skill development leave for officers of labour organizations. Recently in Canada, such support has come from collective agreements, such as those negotiated by the United Auto Workers, and by the provision of federal assistance for labour education to a variety of labour organizations. The principal of locating the responsibility for leave and the development of specific skills with the user of those skills that is inherent in the Employer Training Fund provision has been well exhibited in the labour movement in Canada, and in its relationship with the federal government (see Thomas, Abbey, MacKeracher, Finestone & Wyles, 1982). Leave has been negotiated with

most employers, and maintenance and tuition in the case of the large federations has been paid out of the federal funds. In each case, the federation and its affiliated unions have provided educational funds out of their own resources, more than matching the amount provided by the federal government. While the program of federal assistance has also been extended to smaller unions in Canada, the program has also demonstrated all of the problems associated with the difficulties of providing adequate information to potential participants.

With the introduction of the Labour Standard, and the Employer Training Fund, new developments can occur. Unions as "employers" will be obliged to provide the same training funds, though such money taken from dues has been available for some time. What that may do, however, is encourage them to remedy a serious shortcoming which has been the provision of adequate skill development leave for their senior officers. In addition, the Labour Standard will strengthen existing programs, and encourage others of the larger labour organizations to negotiate agreements with employers for the costs of the skill development program. This, in turn, will allow Labour Canada to devote more of the available resources to the needs of the smaller organizations. There can be no argument about the need for the more rapid and widespread development of the skills associated with effective labour organizations. The present financial relationship with the federal government should be maintained. The introduction of the Labour Standard for skill development leave will represent a model of the combination of individual right and collective interest that we have argued for throughout this paper.

Skill Development Leave Councils—The Third Stage

The Adams' Report argued for the creation of a Vocational Development Fund by the federal government. We support this notion as the main vehicle in providing for those not covered by Employer Training Funds. Further, such skill development leave funds, administered by Councils, should be created at each level of government: federal, provincial, and municipal. The federal fund could be financed by savings from training costs resulting from the establishment of Employer Training Funds and from some of the funds now allocated for Unemployment Insurance. It would administer applications for grants, or grants and loans for the purpose of financing skill development leave. Existing student loan money would also be handled by this new agency.

All provinces have experience with the administration of combinations of grants and loans. What is recommended is that money now provided for a variety of industrial training schemes be included in a new agency for financing skill development leave. The establishment of such an agency at the municipal level will be a novelty, but there is every reason for municipalities to be involved. We believe that they can make a critical contribution to "pre-employment leave" schemes. The presence of a school board related to every municipality, to which increasing numbers of adults are turning for forms of basic education, suggests further reasons for a strong municipal role. The governance of such agencies will depend upon traditional practices in each region and at each level of government, but there is a clear argument for representation of all interested parties. There is also increased experience across Canada

in the creation and management of bodies involving multi-partite representation.

The task of each of these agencies would be to provide information regarding the availability of financial assistance for skill development leave, and the criteria on which financial assistance will be based. These criteria governing support for programs, extending from access to general education to the acquisition of specific skills, would be established annually, and would reflect regional, provincial and national interests. To a large degree they would be based on the Annual Reports by the Learning Council of Canada.

Much of the literature arising from considerations of skill development leave is devoted to debate over what sort of learning objective should be supported and by whom. It is likely that the introduction of multi-funding sources, and the maximum freedom of individual choice will allow that issue to sort itself out. Even in those European countries where leave is legislated, the overwhelming choice is for some form of vocational education. The collective interest in productivity and employment would seem to be shared by many, perhaps even more than sufficient numbers of individuals. The likelihood is that it will prove necessary to persuade sufficient individuals to undertake the general education on which self-development, the acquiring of new skills, and citizenship are based, rather than the reverse.

Educational Provision

The French and Italian systems of skill development leave contain in their statements of purpose the intention to reform their

educational systems. In France, the initial unwillingness of the formal system to respond to the availability of skill development leave resulted in the appearance of hundreds of private agencies engaged in the provision of educational and training programs and resources. It also resulted in the rapid increase of employer and employer-group provided schemes. However, in the decade since the right was introduced, the demand for certification has brought about greater flexibility in the educational system, particularly at the post-secondary level. In Italy, post-secondary providing agencies, after showing an initial reluctance, have become active participants, even to the point of offering their own resources in support of advanced education for leave-takers that the government has not yet agreed to support.

There can be no doubt that the introduction of skill development leave on various foundations will have a powerful reforming effect on present educational systems. Nothing reforms educational agencies more relentlessly than new kinds of students. However, our belief is that it will be a reform of the kind that supports and intensifies changes already under way in almost all of the educational systems in Canada.

Adams reported a list of obstacles to the effective access of potential leave-takers to educational resources in Canada. They are reproduced in the following table (see Adams et al., 1979, pp. 209-210). He also reported examples of programs already in existence in 1978-79 that were promising exceptions to the obstacles, though relatively few in number, and scattered widely across Canada. Experience of the intervening years suggests that these exceptions did

represent trends in Canadian education, and that the increase in "buying" power implied by a reasonably financed system of leave will simply hasten the developments. There are still major changes to take place in the accessibility to programs, to certification, to agencies, and in the practices in teaching and administration which have not in the past encouraged either part-time students or adults.

Nevertheless, changes have taken place in all of these areas. For example, in the past year, the government of Ontario has sought to transfer the main responsibility for adult basic education to the boards of education. There are two elements involved in this transfer, the development of programs, schedules, teaching and administrative skills suited to adult learners, and the transfer of a portion of the financial responsibility to the local ratepayers. It remains to be seen how this will work, though adjustments with respect to the program aspects are already being made. It is not unreasonable to believe that as the local school system demonstrates its program responsibility for adult students, who are at the same time ratepayers and voters, the local political support for the costs of the educational programs will be forthcoming.

Table 1

Educational Access Problems of Potential Adult Students and Possible Solutions

Obstacles to Adult Education	Possible Solutions			Other Changes
	Paid Day Release	Educational Block Release	Alter Traditional Programs	
Programs not available	Maybe	Maybe	Yes	To some extent
Fatigue	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Costs	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Family responsibilities	To some extent	Maybe	Maybe	No
Lack of opportunity for advancement	Maybe	Maybe	Maybe	No
Lack of information	No	No	No	No
Failure to qualify	No	No	No	Entrance requirements, credit articulation
Bureaucratic barriers	To some extent	To some extent	To some extent	No
Time (length of program)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Maybe (e.g., Wayne State)
Residency requirements	No	Maybe	Yes	Yes
Curriculum	No	No	No	Yes
Credit articulation	No	Yes	Yes	Correspondence, etc.
Inconvenient hours	Yes	Yes	Yes	Maybe
				Offices open at night, special assistance
				More money to part-timers
				Child care
				Better career planning in industry

The same argument can be applied to agencies for which the provinces are exclusively responsible. Some alarm has already been expressed by provincial governments at the prospect of thousands, or hundreds of thousands of leave-takers demanding access to agencies and programs for which the province now pays two-thirds of the cost. Even with support for the payment of tuition fees, the cost to the province would be considerable. The alarm will be increased in the light of the apparent plans of the federal government to reduce its share of the cost of provincial support of education.

Economists are often prone to treating educational resources as though they were or are stable commodities, rather than perishable goods. The latter is closer to the reality. Governments with experience in administering and financing educational bodies know that they are perishable goods, and that they must not be totally subject to market choices. That recognition was presumably the reason why the DVA scheme included additional support for those agencies whose programs were selected by DVA-funded students, since it gave those agencies some protection from the effects of simple market demand. Teachers who cannot afford to teach or do research in their area of expertise, do not remain in those areas for very long. Therefore, the integrity of the teaching agencies and their staffs must be protected, and their allocations of resources be subjected to other criteria.

If the federal government proceeds to develop a system or systems of skills development leave, it cannot do so without dependence upon the educational/training resources in the hands of the province. Therefore, it must continue its support of those resources on more than a market demand basis. It must also continue that support in a way that will give the provinces some stability in their expectations.

However, there are additional considerations in terms of new patterns of payment. Enrolment at the post-secondary level has been rising in the past few years, despite expectations to the contrary. It is apparent that a new student body, that body most likely to be representative of users of skill development leave, is already making itself felt not only at the post-secondary level, but at the elementary and secondary level as well. The existing resources are already absorbing some of the students who will be prominent amongst leave-takers. The fact that they are also voters and taxpayers will do a great deal towards increasing political support for provincial expenditures on education. Secondly, the introduction of the Labour Standard, of Employer Training Funds, and of increasing types of financing for skill development leave, will introduce a new source of finance for educational purposes. To be sure, that source will be the market, from which the providing agencies need some protection. But the introduction of those funds into the spending on education and training, from an increased variety of sources, will allow the disposition of more traditional funds to the balancing of the educational system as a whole.

Finally, to repeat, the European evidence so far does not support the fear of huge numbers of leave-takers descending on the educational agencies. Whatever action is taken, the introduction of new students, and their impact, will likely be slow, allowing time for the necessary adjustment in programming, etc. There will, however, be no escaping the reforming influence of those new students. The various new decision makers, including the individual leave-takers, will without doubt wish to use educational resources in different and in an increased variety of ways. Employers, who will experience the earliest increase as a result of more skill development leave, faced with "make" or "buy" decisions, will make use of educational agencies

and other staff of those agencies and other teaching resources of those agencies, in vastly differing ways.

Information

Introduction of any of the proposed mechanisms in support of skill development leave will put immediate pressure on the generation and provision of two different sorts of information. The first is the kind of information relating to the availability of leave to individuals, and the grounds upon which it can be achieved and financed. The second is the type of information upon which the entire system of skill development leave will depend in order to function.

Most governments deceive themselves with respect to the speed with which and the extent to which information of any complexity travels in their societies. It is perhaps an illusion of mass communications.

Canada is no exception. There are many examples of government programs which have failed because expectations about the movement of information were unrealistic, and insufficient attention was paid to ensuring its careful, systematic and prolonged dissemination. It is quite possible that the slow utilization of skill development leave in most European countries where it has been available as a right for nearly a decade—or more—is because too few people know of its existence, or understand its relevance to them (Thomas, 1982). With its intense commitment to a very complex system of skill development leave, the Swedish government has invested heavily in the provision of information, guidance and counselling. Employers are obliged to inform their employees of its existence, and additional counselling resources have been provided in various adult centres.

The same care must be taken in Canada. Without it, the adventure into the provision of skill development leave will be wasted. All of the avenues of government information must be utilized, and they must be utilized regularly over a lengthy period of time. Assistance must be sought from educational agencies, employers, voluntary agencies, the mass media, and all other avenues to adult attention. Legislating the provision of such information is not likely to be effective: cooperation must be sought. The example of "Participaction" as a program that has successfully reached many adults in Canada should be examined. The fact that the system is subject to, and must maximize, "fine-tuning" in the sense of the alteration of criteria for financing, makes the problem greater, but no less critical.

Educational counselling has long been neglected in Canada, and will be an additional critical element in the success of the scheme. Additional incentives need to be introduced for the increased training of counsellors, and experimentation undertaken with respect to the placement of such counsellors with employers, in shopping centres, and other places where adults congregate in large numbers. The management of such counselling services should be the responsibility of the various Skill Development Councils.

The Learning Council of Canada--The Fourth Stage

The second type of information is that needed to implement the various schemes on a day-to-day, year-to-year basis. The issue here is a part of the inadequate collection of information in Canada related to the participation of adults in education. What educational information is collected is confined to the narrowest concepts of formal education and concentrated almost exclusively on the young.

The largest educational enterprise(s) in the country is left unexamined and largely unknown in any of its details. An examination of the international literature on Skill Development leave (Paid Educational Leave) suggests that Canada is not alone in this condition, though West Germany and Denmark are notable exceptions.

Any success in the utilization of a scheme(s) for skill development leave will depend entirely on our ability to alter them on some regular basis in order to meet new demands on our citizens and on the economy. These schemes and the education/training activities associated with them must not seek to emulate the principal characteristics of the youth-centred formal systems of education to which we are accustomed, namely, predictability, stability, and uniformity. In contrast, the dominant characteristics, those already exhibited by much adult education/training, must be flexibility, novelty, and variety.

We propose, therefore, the creation of a central organization devoted to the collection, analysis, interpretation and dissemination of information about learning in Canada, to be called the Learning Council of Canada. It would be modeled upon the Economic Council of Canada, with the responsibility to collect information and publish annually, but with no operating responsibilities with respect to any aspect of skill development leave or the educational activities associated with it. The Council would annually review participation in education and training of all kinds by adults; assess the utilization of various types of skill development leave; examine and review the criteria upon which leave and financial assistance were granted; develop and share means of evaluation of such utilization;

comment on the pattern of participation across the country indicating absences or surpluses of resource provision; and finally, anticipate the immediate future and make recommendations concerning necessary adjustment in the system(s). The Annual Report of the Council would be a basic planning document for all of the parties associated in the system(s)--governments, skill development leave agencies, employers, educational agencies, and groups and individuals. It would be a responsibility of the Council to ensure that the Report got the widest possible circulation.

Conclusions

No society can hope to meet the costs of the education of its adult citizens from a single source of finance. The costs are too great, the demands too varied, the decisions too decentralized for learning to be bureaucratized or financed in conventional ways. For example, a recent survey (Thomas & Taylor, 1983) indicates that every province has at least two major pieces of legislation on which adult education is based, and usually many more; and that at least two and frequently more than a dozen departments are involved. Therefore, we are inescapably faced with a complex system of administration and finance, in which a variety of interests must be at least acknowledged, protected, and frequently encouraged.

Put in the simplest way, the financial support for any specific program must come from one of or some combination of three sources--taxes, employers (and other private groups), and households (individuals). The system of skill development leave we have proposed acknowledges the value and the necessity of the participation of all three of these sources alone or in combination, depending upon the

objectives sought. The promotion of equity and justice, especially with respect to education, has inclined us to turn to taxation as the sole source of finance, coupled with public administration. Yet we know that even where that arrangement might be realized, that is, in the education of children, it does not work. Many other sources of revenue currently contribute to the funding of the education of our children. The elimination of individual participation, such, for example, as in Australia, where all tuition charges were abandoned nearly a decade ago, introduces new rigidities into the allocation of educational resources. New kinds of injustice and privation develop.

We have tried to propose a scheme that will allow for, indeed demand individual participation financially, where it is reasonable and equitable, while at the same time it will assist access for other individuals whose existing exclusion from the system is based on more than financial considerations, as well as for whom it is only financial. We have also argued for a system with the widest possible range of decision-making included in it, so that learning resources can be flexibly and responsively utilized.

There can be no doubt that to enter into any part of this course of action implies a reform of our present educational system. It also implies, along with other current developments, a reform of a different kind.

It is arguable that the British North America Act was ever intended to make the education of adults the exclusive realm of the provincial governments. The senselessness of concluding that it does is surely attested to by the history of education/training in Canada. The federal government, held responsible for the state of the economy,

has been obliged to recognize increasingly the critical effect on that economy of the presence or absence of particular skills. Blocked from direct access to any significant part of the educational establishment, it has been forced to intervene progressively in this century under the rubric of "training," thus exacerbating a dangerous distinction between education and training. The present Skill Development Leave Task Force could have the effect of making the situation worse.

However, in May 1982, the Supreme Court of Ontario ruled that in the eyes of the law of Ontario, there is not and should not be any distinction between education and training (see Seafarers Training Institute vs. The Corporation of the Township of Williamsburg, Supreme Court of Ontario, Divisional Court, May 26, 1982).

Whether this decision will be taken up in order to frustrate the federal government's use of training to accomplish its learning objectives remains to be seen. However, the Report of the Skill Development Leave Task Force, necessitating as it must careful collaboration with all levels of government, could be a vehicle for rethinking and redistributing educational and training responsibilities in Canada, so that they can become more efficient, more effective and perhaps most important of all, more comprehensible to everyone. This simple but fundamental idea, leave for purposes of learning, cannot succeed without multi-party cooperation. Perhaps it can be the vehicle for a new grand design for education.

Summary of Recommended Stages to Universality

1. That a Labour Standard, guaranteeing skill development leave of two weeks' duration every year, with protection of

position, rank, and benefits, but without automatic access to financial support, be introduced.

2. That all employers of more than 25 employees be obliged to establish an Employers' Training Fund, based on 1% of gross payroll. Any amount not spent on training in a financial year would be paid to the federal government.
3. That Skill Development Leave Councils be established at each level of government, with the purpose of managing all the funds now available for students of all kinds; and with the purpose of dispensing grants and loans according to publicly established criteria.
4. That a Learning Council of Canada be established, modeled after the Economic Council of Canada, and with the purpose of collecting, analyzing, interpreting and disseminating information regarding adult participation in education, and the utilization of Skill Development Leave.

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